



A notable and comfortable exposition, vpon the  
FOVRTH OF MATHEVV; CONCERNING the Temptations of Chryst, Preached in  
S. Peters Church, in Oxenford;

By Thomas Bentham, Fellow of Magdalin Colledge,  
and afterwards Byshop of LIECHFIELD  
and COVENTRIE.

GOD IS MY



DEFENDER

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Math. 4. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11.

Then Iesus was lead a way of the Spirite  
into the Wildernesse, to be tempted  
of the Deuil. &c.



The misery of man  
(dearely beloved in  
our Saviour Iesus  
Christe) may the  
more plainely and  
manifestly appeare  
onto vs, if we dili-  
gently consider, in what state, digni-  
tie, and honour man was, before the  
olde malicious, and wicked Serpent,  
with his subtle suggestions and de-  
ceipt, had tempted, perswaded, and  
ouercommed him. And againe, if af-  
ter his ouerthrow wee consider, in  
what miserable calamitie, captiuitie,  
slauerie, and seruile bondage, not on-  
ly Adam him selfe, but also all his pos-  
terity, is enthralled and imprysoned  
with him. And againe if we marke,  
how weak, feeble, and impotent, since  
2 that



*A godly sermon of M. Benibams,*

that time, man is in all knowledge, godlinesse, and obedience: and how strong, saucie, malapert, and readie the aduersarie is, to detain and continue him in ignorance, idolatrie, disobedience, and rebellion against God, and his holy word. Which unsupportable miseries, if they be deeply considered, and duely weighed in the balance of our consciences, with a conference of the former state, which was happy, blessed, & immortall, with the present state, which is sinfull, accursed, and damnable: may easily make vs to perceiue, that there is some great cause, why our felicity, is changed into miserie, our blessednesse, into cursednesse, our obedience, into rebellion, immortallitie into corruption: and to be short, life, into death: and not this onely, but also that the enemy hath been strong and able inough to keepe and hold man without hope of recouerie, in these foresayd distresses The cause wherof, the ignorant and blind worldlings, impute and ascribe to the inconstancie of fortune, and

Upon the Tentations of Christ,

and as they terme them; infortunate  
and unlucky chaunces, where as the  
holy word of God declareth vnto vs,  
that all these miseries and calamiti-  
ties, are the fearefull punishmentes  
and horrible plagues of God against  
sine, as a iust reward and stipend of  
the same. Wherefore the godly, per-  
ceiuing thorough these continual and  
daily plagues, which we suffer, & gret  
displeasure & indignation of God to  
be so sore stirred and incensed against  
man for his sin, and that they are not  
able to stand in his presence; with la-  
mentation and groanings; seeke for  
that helpe, aid, and succour against  
all stormie Tempestes, which they  
know to be set forth and appointed in  
Gods holy worde: trusting either by  
those meanes to come into Gods fa-  
uour again. or else by no other means  
possible. And these means as they are  
set forth in diuers and sundry places  
of scripture: so are they in no place  
more to our comfort and consolation,  
then in this present gospell, red in the  
holy Church as this day. wherein is

Gen. 22. 1.



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contained, a mighty, triumphant, and glorious victory of our saviour Iesus Christe. gotten to all Christian and faithfull beleeuers ouer that trouble some, auncient, and expert tempter sathan, the original and cursed cause of all these wretched intollerable miseries. Who, at the beginning, gaue man such an ouerthrow, that from thence to this conflict, there was neuer more manifest hope of rising, nor a more euident signe of victory. For here is declared vnto vs, that the wicked and malicious worker of darkness, which hath so long pinched at our heele and bitten vs by the scete, according to Gods promise, hath now such a soyle, that he is not onely trodden vnderfoote, but is in his heade so wounded, bruised and crushed in peeces, by that most blessed seede of the woman, betweene whome there hath been so long continuall enimity, that there is on his part no hope of helpe, no recovery of health, bee he neuer so strong and stoute, be he neuer so crafty and deceitful. If we, especially that  
mean

Gen. 3. 15.



*Vpon the Tentations of Christ.*

meane to be true souldiers to our captaine, will take vpon vs the armour of God, that *S. Paul* willeth vs to put Eph. 6. 11. on. We may nowe (God be thanked) not onely withstand him, and boldly fight with him, but also even vanquish him, and trample him vnder our feet. For he, which did ouerthrow now is ouerthrowne. the deteluer is caught in his own snare, the Captain is become captiue, the ruler of the world, the Prince of darkenes, the father of all lying, whome man coulde not withstand, nor the world subdue, he being Lord thereof, with a worde rebuked & reiected, is vtterly subdued, & clean put to flight. We need not therfore be afraid to fight, seeing our captaine is a conqueror, & our aduersary conquered, our captaine strong, our enimie weake, our Captaine to stande, our enimie to flee, our Captaine to haue praise and glory, our enemy shame and reproch: but the victorie of Christ may bee an encouraging of vs to fight, and his valiant conquest an example for vs to stand

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stoutly against our ennemie. And is not here (dearely beloved) great comfort and consolation for all them, that are afraid of the devil: Therefore I note it the more diligently, because that when we are tempted, as our saviour Christ was, we give not place dastardly to our aduersary whō God suffereth to tempt, partly, y we may learn to know y vertue of our armor which we haue put on: partly also, that we may learne to fight and bee warriours when wee shall be tried. By temptation a man is tried, as gold is tried in a furnace: & by that means a man shal not waxe proude, hauing his enemy alwaies ready to abate his courage, & to trie his manhood. It is no small comfort to haue this victorie set before our eyes, as it is most plainly written in this presente Gospell, by the Euangelist. But leasse I shoulde confounde the victory, I wil orderly speake of euery part by it selfe, if tyme wil suffer me, and the spirit of God giue me utterance, Let vs pray &c.

vpon the Tentations of Christ.

Math. 4. Monday  
Then Iesus was lead away of the Spirit  
into the Wildernesse, to be tempted  
of the Deuil. &c.

Text.

The first worde in this gospel, mo-  
ueth vs to peruse a part of the  
Chapter going afore: because it is a  
consequent following former acts and  
deedes. In which Chapter, the euan-  
gelist S. Matthew, hath set downe the  
office and ministerie of S. Iohn the  
baptist, how he testified of Christ, and  
prepared the way for the people I/ra-  
el, so much as was necessarye for his  
purpose, that entended to write and  
set forth Christ his acts, life, and con-  
uersation: Because therefore that now  
the order of the history, and course of  
things do so require, he beginneth to  
write what Christ did after his bap-  
tism, & most heauenly commencement  
which was immediatly going before  
in y<sup>e</sup> latter end of the third chapter  
for whereas Christ alwaies before  
his baptism, was obedient vnto Ios-  
eph & Mary, occupied & exercised con-  
tinually in their labours and busi-  
nesses:



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nesses: yet now by baptisme altered,  
as it were, into a new man, and con-  
secrated vnto God his Father, whose  
will he came to fulfill, returned not  
thither whence he came, to become  
suche an one as hee was before, as  
in other solemne feastes and times  
at I. rusalem hee was wont, but [im-  
mediately] after his Baptisme, as  
S. Mark termeth that, which this E-  
uangelist calleth [then,] hee was led  
of the holy ghost into the desart to bee  
boyd of company and conuersation of  
men, and to liue with beastes, where  
was scarcety and lack of things neces-  
sary for the sustentation of mans life,  
that the Deuil might the rather take  
occasion to tempt him. being in a place  
where he wanted reliefe, then where  
hee had plentye of all thinges. For if  
Christ had beene in the Citie Ierusa-  
lem, or in other villages, where victu-  
als might haue beene come by conue-  
niently and in time, the deuil woulde  
not then so boldly haue enterprised to  
bring him stones to make breade:  
which had beene folly and in vayne,  
when



**Upon the Temptations of Christ.**

When bread had beene at hande. But because there was nothing in the desert for man to eat, there the tempter took occasion to tempt & to try Christ. Here, in that the Euangelist saith, Then was Iesus lead of the spirit, that is, immediatly after his baptism, I note as a fruitfull lesson, that they which are appoynted of God to any high office or ministry, are, or ought to be cleane altered and changed from that they haue beene before, as was heere our Saviour Christ. Who, before his baptism, liued and laboured ordinarily, as the common sort of men did, but after he was baptised, as he altered his liuing, so did he his labour, which before was bodilye exercise, but now was all spirituall and heavenly, in praying, fasting, and preaching. S. Paule teacheth vs the like lesson, that after we be baptised, we are no more as we were. He saith: **Rom. 6. 3.** Remember ye not, that we all which are baptised in the name of Iesus Christ, are baptised with him to dye? We are buried with him by baptism for to dye, that  
like

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lyke as Christ was raised vp from death by the glory of the father: euen so we also should walke in a new life. He sayth we should now, after our baptisme walke in a new life, not in that life we were in before. For now being baptised in Christ, we haue put on Christ, as he writeth to the Galatians: and all they which are called to the state of grace, by baptism, put of the olde man, and put on the new, and that is the true altering and chaunging of our life. Yet, there is an other altering and chaunge of life, in all them that are called to any high office. As, *Moses* being called of God to deliuer his people from the tyrannie of *Pharaoh*, and receiuing his office with signes & miracles from God: neither returned to his Father in lawes sheepe, which he was keeping when he was called, nor liued as he was wont, but in the name of the Lorde tooke vpon him to deliuer his people, and safely conduct them thorough the Red sea, and was their pastour and gouernour, after that in the wilderness, forty years.

Gal. 3.

Exod. 3. & 4.

Exod. 3. & 4.

Upon the Tentations of Christ.

peares. King David also the yongest <sup>1.Sam.16.</sup>  
sonne of his father Iſay, called from  
his fathers flock, and annoynted king  
by Samuell, yet left his flocke, and fol-  
lowed his vocation. These and such  
like examples doe well declare, that  
men called to an high office or mini-  
sterie, must be altered from that they  
were, and be conformed in life and con-  
uersation to their ministerie. Which  
thing, I beseech you all to doe, when-  
soever God, of his infinite goodnesse  
and mercye, calleth you to any high  
state or condition of office or ministe-  
rie. For you ought of very due ty and  
conscience to alter your life and con-  
uersation, that it may be agreing and  
answerable to your office, that your  
office may be furnished and honored,  
rather with a Godly life, then defaced  
and stayned with a corrupt conuersa-  
tion. But especially you my brethren  
which are called of God to the digni-  
tie of Priesthood, to bee ministers of  
his secrets, Stewards of his household,  
Preachers of his moste holy worde,  
Teachers of his people that live in  
blind.



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blindnes and ignorance, Pastors of  
his sheepe, watchmen ouer his flocke,  
bought with Christe his precious  
bloud. I beseech and exhort you in the  
tender mercy of God, to consider your  
condition, to looke to your office & du-  
ty, to remember your vocatiō, to haue  
an eye to your conscience, to which  
I speak, not to your eares. Now, you  
are not of y<sup>e</sup> world, wherefore your cō-  
uersation must bee heavenly: you are  
consecrated to God, your liuing must  
be godly. Note wel what S. Paul writ-  
teth to *Timothie*: No man that warreth,  
entangleth himselfe with worldly busi-  
nesse, and that because he woulde please  
him, that hath chosen him to be a soul-  
ier. God hath chosen you for his chiefe  
souldiers, seek therfore to please him,  
and entangle not your selues with  
worldly cares and businesse. But alas  
what shoulde I exhort, where exhor-  
tation will take no place, or desire,  
where intreatie will not serue? The  
ministrye is come to this pointe al-  
moste generally, that if you will ex-  
amin any ones liuing, you shall find  
more



*vpon the Tentations of Christ.*

more, that are worthy to be reprov'd,  
then rewarded, and more to be lamented,  
then well liked, such is our imperfection.  
We are called to an high office, an office of great dignity. Wee  
are Gods his ministers, and nothing appeareth lesse in vs then Godlines.  
Moses called to bring Gods people from the tyranny of Pharaoh, left keeping his sheepe,  
and followed his vocation, wee are called to guide Gods people from darknes of ignorance,  
to the light of knowledge, from the bondage of sin, to the liberty of grace,  
and yet we stand in our old state, we forsake not the world, we change not  
our course, wee alter not our life, wee should be light, and we are darknesse,  
we should be ministers, and wee are become Lords, wee shoulde feede our  
flocks, and we famish them Finally, we should be preachers, and wee are  
dumb doggs, and tongue tied. God, I beseech him, loose them, that we may  
worthily set forth his praise, which now with silence we obscure, that our  
light of preaching may so shine before  
men,

men, that they see our good woorkes,  
with the change and renuing of our  
liues, and so they may glorifie our fa-  
ther which is in heauen. Wee haue  
here also another lesson, both notable  
and very fruitfull: that al they, which  
are so called of God, are most object to  
all kindes of temptation, and they e-  
specially, which are mosste in sauour  
with God. For our Saviour Christe  
before his baptism, was not so temp-  
ted of the Deuill, as he was after,  
when hee was seperated from the  
worlde, and consecrated wholly to the  
ministerie of God, and execution of  
his office, then the subtle Sophister,  
and craftie tempter, began to stir the  
coales. He perceiued Christ went a-  
bout to set forth the glory of his Fa-  
ther, which he most spitefully enuied  
from the beginning, and so diligent-  
lie sought wayes and meanes, as hee  
could most peruerfly to let and hinder  
him. Neither did the malicious Ser-  
pent at the beginning tempt any cre-  
ature, but that which was made af-  
ter the likenes and similitude of God.

hoping to deface Gods glory, if hee  
might or could deforme that creature,  
which was of all Creatures vnder  
Heauen, moſte lyke vnto G D D.  
Euen ſo here, when he perceived that  
Chriſt was by the mouth of God de-  
clared to be his onely beloved ſonne,  
in whom his anger againſt ſin, and  
indignation againſt ſinners, was ſul-  
ly quieted and appeaſed: and y Chriſt  
now ſhould take vpon him to worke  
the will of his father, ſo as ſhoulde be  
for his fathers glory, like as hee did  
before with our firſte parentes, ſo he  
doth now: that is, he laboureth firſt to  
bring Chriſte to that point, that hee  
ſhould not beleue the voyce of God,  
which had ſayde: *This is my beloved  
ſonne*: Secondly, from the true vn-  
derſtanding of Gods worde, and to  
bring him to manifeſt idolatrie at  
the length, contrary to Gods worde.  
In like danger of temptation are all  
they, which be either in high authori-  
tie, as was Dauid, Zedechias, Moſes,  
when the people grudged, or els that  
be greatly in Gods favour, as the good



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man Iob. and Tobias, which was made blind by the Deuill, and the children of Israel in the desert, which were stirred of the Deuill to marmure against Moses and God, and diuers other which haue beene suddenly tempted. The Deuill is crafty, and tempteth not all men one way, because all men are not in loue with one thing, and because he will not seme to be as he is. He changeth himselfe into an Angell of light, as S. Paule sayeth to the intent he may deceiue. Therefore he tempted Eur one way, and the iust and righteous man Iob an other. He tempteth Christ here one way, and afterwarde his Apostles an other. As Christ himselfe beareth witnesse, saying: Simon the Deuill hath desired you, to sift you as it were wheat, but I haue prayed for thee, that thy faith faile not. And as we see by experience, Cities, Townes, or Castles, set on high hilles or mountaines, are most obiect to all stormie tempestes, and violence of weather: In the very like manner are they which are called to high dignitie,  
great

2. Cor. 11.

Luk. 22.



Upon the Tentations of Christ.

great authoritie, and worthy offices,  
most in danger of temptation and the  
assaultes of the Devill. The golden  
wyter *Chrysostome*, in his fourth Ho- Chrysost.  
hom. 4 in  
Esay. 6.  
melie vpon these wordes of the Pro-  
phet *Isa. 47, vidi dominum. &c.* hath a pre-  
tie similitude to confirme this to bee  
true. As the maner is in ships, they  
which haue an emptie ship feare not  
Pyrates of the sea, which seeke not to  
briue or breake an emptie or voyde  
ship: but they which haue their ships  
full fraughted with wares and trea-  
sures of merchandises stand in fear of  
robbers, which seeke thither where  
gould, siluer, and precious stones are  
to be had: Euen so the devill doth not  
easily pursue a sinner, but rather a  
good and godly man, who hath much  
riches. Let that man therfore, yee all  
men take heed, which eyther are pla-  
ced in high authoritie, or haue recei-  
ued gyftes and Talents at God his  
hand, of the wicked tempter, that go-  
eth about to robbe and spoyle man, of  
such heavenly treasures as God be-  
stoweth vpon him. And here also, they

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that haue grace may learne, that the  
lyfe of a Christian man, is neyther  
playe, nor pastime, neither daun-  
sing nor valiance, neither fleshly, nor  
licentious liberty: but a laborious  
and dangerous warfare, a charie and  
circumspect keeping of a Godlie and  
innocent life. Let carnall Gospellers  
perswade themselves they haue God  
by the toe, or in their bosome neuer so  
much: if they be not in a ward of this  
warfare to fight against the Devill,  
the victorie of Christ shall not auaille  
them, but ouerthrow them with their  
captaine, whose lusts and desires they  
follow. For all they, which will liue god-  
lie in Christ Iesu, must suffer persecution,  
which is not without great tempta-  
tion. Wherefore Barnabas and Paule  
after they had preached at Derbe, re-  
turned to Lystra, Icone, and Antioch,  
making strong the Disciples, and  
comforting them, with exhortations  
to continue in the faith, because that  
thorow many tribulations, wee must en-  
ter into the kingdome of God. Many ex-  
amples might be brought to proue,  
that

*Vpon the Temptations of Christ,*

that they are most in danger of temptation, which are most in authoritie: But because the time will not suffer me to be long, I will come to the Evangelist, which sayeth: Christ was led into the desert, to be tempted of the Deuill. As these wordes declare the fact to be of God his prouidence, and no fortunate or vnlucky chance or happening vnto Christ: so it is an admonition for vs all, to enterprise and take nothing in hand, that is of great weight and importaunce, vnlesse we be ledde there vnto by God his holy spirite, or commaunded by his worde to doe the same. For Christ him selfe was led of the spirit to be tempted of the Deuill, in the desert. Not to fast, but to bee tempted, and although hee fasted, it was but an accidentarie or incident thing, besides the principall matter, which was, to be tempted. This example wou'd be diligently noted for two causes. One is, that it is a particuler example, but once done of our Saviour Christ in all his life: The other is, that the holy Ghost led him to worke



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The same miracle. And therefore it ought not to be an example of imitation vnto vs, as many men woulde haue it, but a wonderfull myracle once wrought of one man, and no more. Here I may note by the way, rather then speake of by leaseure, how small consideration men haue vsed heretofore, which haue inioyned all them, that woulde take vpon them to be ministers of Gods worde, a single lyfe without marriage, no respect of circumstances had, eyther of him that taketh the yoke and bond vpon him, or of God, in whose power it is, to giue the gift of chastitie as it pleaseth him. For consider these two thinges, fasting, and chastitie, what affinity they haue, and whether they be of like force or difficultie to bee obserued of man, or no. As God hath made man to liue: so he hath appointed him an ordinarie way to liue, vnlesse he haue a special prerogative and miraculous helpe of God, as had Moses and Elias by the space of forty dayes. And so in like case, God hath made man to mul-  
tiply

From the Temptations of Christ.

tiplv & increase the worlde, to which  
ordinaunce with obseruation of cir-  
cumstaunces necessary to the same, e-  
uery man is bounden, saue they which  
haue a speciall prerogative of God, to  
lyue in fleshe without fleshe, which is  
an Angels nature, and not mans, as  
S. Hierome sayth. They may be asha-  
med therefore, that thus wryth and  
wrest the scriptures, to satisfie their  
licentious affections and wicked hu-  
mors, to condemne that in their de-  
crees, which in God his word, is both  
lawfull and laudable. Little they re-  
garde the leading of the holy Ghost,  
without whose motion they shoulde  
enterpryse nothing, seeing our Saut  
our Christ, was led of the holy Ghost  
into the desert, to be tempted of the  
Deuill.

And when he had fasted forty dayes, The Tem-  
and forty nights, he was hungry.

For our sakes supposeth forty nights  
to be added of the forty dayes, for a  
difference betweene the two fastes,  
and this for the manner of the dayes  
was,

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was, to fast all the day, and to eate at  
night: But Christ did not so, for the  
space of forty dayes, and forty nights,  
in all which tyme he hungred not.  
Two such exampls of admiration  
rather then imitation, we haue in the  
olde Testament: the one is of the holy  
Exod. 24. Prophet of God *Moses*, who beeing  
commanded of God to ascend & come  
vp, into the mount *Sinai*, to fetch the  
tables of the commandements which  
he shoulde afterwarde deliuer to his  
people, fasted at the tyme that he con-  
tinued in the Mount, which was for-  
ty dayes, and forty nights, and at that  
space neither eate nor dranke, as is  
written in the booke of *Exodus*. The  
other is, of the Prophet *Elias*, who  
3. King. 19. hearing from the wicked Queene *Ie-  
zabell Achabs* wyfe, and resting him-  
selfe vnder a iuniper tree being wea-  
rie of his life and wishing to die, was  
fed by an Angell sent to him from  
God, with a cake baken on the roles  
and a cup of water. After which refe-  
ction & nourishment, he walked forty  
dayes and forty nights a. 1. the  
strength



Upon the Tentations of Christ.

Strength therof, unto Horeb the mount  
of God. Our Saviour Christ therefore,  
whom these two Prophets did prefi-  
gure, when he shoulde begin to pub-  
lish and preach the Gospell, departed  
from the company and society of man  
into the desert, where he fasted forty  
dayes, and forty nightes, not excee-  
ding the measure which Moses and  
Elias had before obserued, least hee  
might seeme to passe the boundes of  
mans nature, and by a miracle make  
it seeme incredible that hee was true  
man, whom after wards the experience  
of hunger did testify to be so. Whom  
then as Christ is better then Moses,  
so much is grace better then the law,  
because that as Saint Iohn sayth  
The lawe was given by Moses, but  
grace and truth came by Iesus Christ.  
Iohn. 1.  
For notwithstanding the lawe was  
written with Gods own hand, and  
pronounced with his mouth, as Paul  
sayth: which lawe was a shadow of good  
things to come, yet not the thing it selfe  
of substance. Wherefore if of Moses fast-  
ed forty dayes and nightes, before he recei-  
ued

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ued and ministred the law, it was no  
derogation to Christs his dignity, to  
fast forty dayes, before he beganne to  
preach the Gospell, which is the truth  
of the shadows that went before. And  
in like sort, *Elias*, as it followeth in  
the 3 of *Kings* the 19. Chapter: when  
he went a farre iourney, and shoulde  
bring a great matter to passe, that is,  
anoint, or as we in *England* term it,  
Crowne two Kings, and consecrate  
one Prophet, fasted forty dayes, and  
forty nightes. Which undoubtedly  
was a great Miracle in him, both to  
labour a long iourney, and also to fast  
all the iourneys space. Christ therefore  
to shew himselfe nothing inferiour to  
either of them, fasted forty dayes and  
forty nightes. Upon which fast, and  
the fastes of *Moses* and *Elias*, because  
the Church hath of long time, taken  
occasion to ground and institute this  
fast of Lent, which at this present we  
observe I intend by Gods grace and  
your Christian patience, by iust occa-  
sion of this text, and by opportunitie  
of the time and place, to speake some  
thing

*Vpon the Tentations of Christ.*

thing of this our Lent Fast. First, 1  
shewing the true definition of fast,  
and that this fast of Lent, obserued  
nowe by vs, can neither be grounded  
on the old, nor the new Testament:  
Secondarily, how it was first institut 2  
ed in the Church: and then, how far 3  
our superstitious vsing of it, differeth  
from the first institution.

Fast is not, as wee commonly call 1  
and vse it, for bearing of flesh in Lent,  
or vpon Fridayes, Ember dayes, and  
such other, for so no learned man did  
euer take it: but it is an abstinence  
from all kinde of meate and drinke,  
wherewith mans body is nourished,  
and a continence from all vaine wan-  
ton pleasures, wherewith mans mind  
may be infected. This generall fast  
hath bene diuided into two kinds: one 1  
Corporall, when wee abstaine from  
bodily meates, the other Spirituall, 2  
when wee reframe from all kinde of  
vice and sinne. Some, take fast to  
be a due satisfaction of all mans sen-  
ses: as if a man liue with his eyes,  
to turne them away, as he regardeth  
Vnities, Psal. 119.



A godly sermon of M<sup>r</sup>. Benthams,

Math. 23. Vanities, as David sayth, or else to plack  
them out (as Christ biddeth) when they  
offend vs. And likewise in all other  
partes and senses of mans bodye.  
Howbeit this is more spirituall then  
the other, that I haue recited. For in  
the other are included three kindes of  
fast. One is, abstinence from meate  
and drinke to keepe vnder the body,  
that the flesh be not fierce against the  
spirite: and that is voluntary, bled of  
euery man as he seeth occasion with-  
out compulsion. Such is their fast,  
though not of like force, that for their  
health abstaine to disgeat euil surlets,  
and superfluous meate. An other kind  
is of necessitie, not enioyned man by  
any lawe, but by God: As in time of  
Dearth, Famine, and scaritie of vi-  
ctuall. This fast as it is not voluntas-  
rily bled of man, so it is not obserued  
without great grudging and murmur-  
ring againste God which sendeth it,  
as a plague for our sinne. And this  
fast they that lye in bondes and pri-  
son, lacking necessary meate & drinke,  
doe susteine and abyde. The thirde  
kind

kinde of fast, is a generall fast of all men, and women. Which the Jewes often vsed, especially in the time of great plagues, warrs, and such extremities, absteyning from meate and drinke in a hes and sackcloth al the daye long, thereby to humble themselves before God. Yet none of these fasts are like that heauenlye fast of Christ, Moses, and Elias. For their fasts were aboue these fastes in all points. Wherefore touching the first part of fast, which we obserue all this Lent, it is most true that I sayd before: It could not be grounded on the old Testament. For notwithstanding that Moses fasted forty dayes & more, and Elias once, yet because their fastes were miraculous, we neither ought nor can sincerely follow them. And besides, we may by as good reason follow Moses in all other miracles that hee wrought, as in this: And so likewise Elias. For if they had beene workes as well of imitation, as admiration, no doubt the Jewes which were so studious to inuent new traditions,

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**Exod. 24.**

**Exod. 34.**

dittons, would haue made this one of their cheifest. But they knew verie well that as these fastes were myrracles: so they were in no case of man to be imitated. But to examine it more nearely. *Moses* fasted fourty daies before he receiued the commaundments of almighty God, contayned in the two Tables: which when hee had throwne downe and broken, as hee came from the hill, for the displeasure hee conceived against *Aaron*, and the people: he was commanded to ascend the second time to receiue the law at Gods hand, and to bring and teach it the people. And so he did. Whereupon the *Iewes* in remembrance of the law given them by *Moses*, keepe a solemn feast every year, in the first day of y<sup>e</sup> ninth moneth: that is, as they count their moneth on the first day of May. It is one of their solempne feastes called *Penticost*, their *Whitsonday*, which was the fiftieth day after they were come forth of *Egypt*. They obserue a solempne Feast, but no fasting for it. In the tenth moneth the seuenth



nenth day: they observe and keepe one  
 fasting day for a remembraunce of  
 the tables which Moses brake, when Exod. 32.  
 he heard that the people committed  
 Idolatrie. Seeing therefore the Jewes  
 yearly celebrate a memory of the  
 law given, and also fast one day in re-  
 membraunce of breaking the tables:  
 It is not to be thought contrary, but  
 they woulde willingly have observed  
 Lent as we do, if it had bin but mans  
 exercise, and no miracle. They obser-  
 ved diuers dayes for faste and abstin-  
 ence, as the third day of the first mo-  
 neth, which is September, which is  
 called the fast of Gedalia. In the fourth  
 moneth they fast in remembraunce of  
 the siege that Nabuchodonosor layd a-  
 gainst the citie Ierusalem. In the first  
 month on the thirtieth day they kept  
 the fast of Esther and Mordecheus. And  
 although that Esther commaunded all  
 the Jewes to fast three dayes and three Hest. 4.  
 nights to obtayne Gods fauour, that  
 they might find fauour and grace be-  
 fore the king Assuerus, and so escape  
 the bloody handes of Haman, which  
 intended

*A godly sermon of M. Benthams,*

intended their deathes all in one day:  
yet in remembrance of the same, the  
Iewes obserued but one day yearely,  
and that was the thirteenth day of  
the first moneth. And this fast was  
one of the longest fastes that I haue  
observed in the old Testament: except  
we should take it, that the Nininites  
fasted all the tyme that was graunte  
d them for repentance, which was  
Ionas. 3. forty dayes. But that they fasted so  
long, it is incredible, because man,  
beast, and all kind of cattell fasted, or  
els surely the popish church would  
not haue fayled to draw that into ex  
ample, when Moses and Elias would  
not serue their purpose. Here I haue  
rehearsed the greatest part of the  
Iewes fasting dayes, which were or  
dinarly and yearely vsed of them, ei  
ther in remembrance of present deli  
uerie from their enemies, or some  
great calamitie that befell them  
vpon such dayes as they kept fasted.  
But our Lent fast can bee grounded  
on none of all these, because that in  
the fore sayd monethes there was but  
one

*Upon the Tentations of Christ.*

one day fasted. And as for their extraordinaryes, which they kept by occasion of plague, Battell, Famine, and such like greate calamities, as they were not certainly obserued vpon any daye: So wee can not stablish oure Lent after them, because their dayes and moneths are variable. And if we should so doe, yet our fast agreeth not with theirs, in so much as they put no such difference betweene fishe and fleshe, as we do, although indeed they had certaine kindes of fleshe prohibited in their law. And as for the fast which the Secte of the Pharises in Christs time obserued twice a weeke, it were foolish to obiect it for any confirmation of our Lent. For why should we approue y<sup>e</sup> which the Pharises did, who (as both Iosephus & Epiphanius witness) were an hereticall sect? And as they superstitiously inuēted & commanded it, so they most wickedly abuse it: As we may learne by the wordes of our Sauour, when hee warneth his disciples to take heed of their fastings, prayers, and almes deedes. Here then



*A godly sermon of M. Benthams,*  
is no authority in the old Testament  
to uphold our old accustomed Lent.

Now to come to the new Testa-  
ment, we shal find neither reason nor  
authoritie there, which can make for  
the obseruation of the same, vnlesse  
we ground it vpon this fast of Christ.  
And that cannot be: For Christe his  
fast as it was much beyond mans na-  
ture, so naturally it ought not to bee  
practised or attempted of any man, be-  
ing not an example imitative, but  
miraculous. But the Papistes which  
woulde gladly beare out the matter  
with the authoritie of this place, al-  
leadge a saying of S. Gregorie, *That*  
*euery action of Christ is our instruction.*  
The saying of it selfe is moste true:  
but their conclusion gathered of it, is  
most false: that we must doe al things  
that he did, because they are our in-  
struction. For this is as good a reason  
as theirs is: euery action of Christ is  
our instruction, but to heale the lame,  
to make the blind see, the dumb speak:  
the deafe heare, are actions of Christ.  
Therefore we must make the blind,  
see,

Upon the Tentations of Christ.

See, the dumbe, speake &c. Who is so ignorantly blinde, that cannot see the the absurditie and foolishnesse of this reason? And what prerogative or pre eminence should Christ haue, I pray you, if eyther we ought or could do the like? To presume to doe them were great derogation to his glory, and undoubtedly commeth of the pride of the Devill, that woulde seeme to be like God. I marvell much that they can spy that in Scripture which men of profound knowledge could not see, For Chrysostome plainly affirmeth, y our saviour Christ saith not his fast is to bee imitated. whereas he might propose his Fast of forty dayes, but he sayth, Learn of me, for I am mecke & humble in heart. In y new testament we haue plentifully declared vnto vs both in y Euangelists & in the Epistles of the apostles, wherein we ought to follow Christ, and yet we are in no place willed to follow his forty dayes fast. Truth it is, that the gospell both exhorteth and commandeth vs to fast but it appointeth vs no certayne day

In Mat. hom

47.

*A godly sermon of M. Benthams,*

as: thou shalt fast euery Fryday and  
Saturday, but not y Sunday, neyther  
doth it appoint vs to fast moze from  
flesh then fish, God his woꝛde, makes  
no difference betweene the one kind,  
and the other. For our sauour Chꝛist  
when hee willeth vs to fast, saythe on  
this wise: when thou fastest, anoint thy  
head, and wash thy face. By which  
words he would we should auoide hi-  
pocrisie, and not appear superstitious  
vnto the woꝛld, but that we shoulde so  
fast, that our Father which seeth in se-  
crete, may reward vs openlye. Hee ma-  
keth no mention heere at all, ey-  
ther of his fourtye dayes, or of anye  
kind of meate which we shoulde ab-  
staine from: Yea, we may see by his  
communication with the Scribes and  
Pharises, what his will was concer-  
ning eating of meates. For he sayth,  
That which goeth into the mouth of man  
defileth not the man, but that which com-  
meth from the hearte, that defileth the  
man: as euill thoughts, murther, adultrie,  
fornication, theft, false witnes, and slan-  
ders. Wherefoze Cyrill vppon these  
woꝛdes

Mat. 6.

Mat. 15.



**vpō the Tentations of Chrīst.**

**wordes of Chrīst, in S. Iohn his Gos-  
pell, By this all men shall know that yee  
are my Disciples, if yee loue one an other.  
For as much as the perfection of  
all vertue consisteth in loue, let no  
man thinke hee can attaine to anye  
great thing by abstinence or fasting,  
or by lying on the ground, or by any  
vertuous exercises els, vnlesse he loue  
his brother: for he is not carried to the  
marke, but an other way. Such is  
Chrīst his commaundement concer-  
ning fast, not that he requireth no ab-  
stinence from meates at all. For as  
S. Luke testifieth he giueth this war-  
ning to his disciples, and it may well  
serue as a caueat for vs: Take heed to  
your selues, least at any time your heartes  
be ouercharged with surfeting and drun-  
kenesse, and cares of this life, and least  
that day come on you suddenly, which shal  
catch as in a snare, al them that dwel vpo  
the earth, watch therfore & pray alway,  
that yee may auoyd all these euilles. If  
Lent had beene so necessary for mans  
saluation, as the Bishoppes decrees  
make it, which say it is a deadly and**

**Cyrill vpon  
Iohn. 13.**

**Luke. 21.**

noy lly  
2.1.1101

damnable sinne to break it, certainly  
y euangelists wold not haue omitted  
it, no more then they did other things  
which they haue left vs in their wri-  
tings to follow. Christ in no place of y  
the new testament sayth, he y wil fol-  
low me, let him fast once in the yeare

Luk. 9. forty daies, but he saith: He that wil fol-  
low me, let him deny him selfe, & take vp  
his crosse dayly, and follow me. If any  
man wil object that a Christian man  
his fast, is a part of his crosse: then I  
wil answer, that his crosse must bee  
daily taken, and so by y means a fast  
of forty dayes will not serue, but hee  
must fast euery daye, all the dayes of  
his life. If any of you require a fur-  
ther or playner viewe of the matter,  
looke vpon our Sauour his sermons  
made to his Disciples in the mount.  
Wherein he sheweth the happye and  
blessed state of all Christian and faith-  
ful beleeuers, and yet maketh no men-  
tion of such happinesse or beatitude,  
as is pretended our Lent or our absti-  
nence from fleshe bringeth with it.

Mat. 5. Blessed are the poore in Spirite, (saythe  
Christ)

Vpon the Tentations of Christ.

Christ) they that mourne, the meeke, they that hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the poore in hart, the peacemakers, they that suffer persecution for righteousness sake. &c. In all which hee saith not, they are blessed that fast forty dayes in Lent and abstayne from flesh: nay, there is not one worde that can bring a man to any thought or imagination of it, except hee surmise that S. Luke make for him, because he sayth simply, Blessed are they that hunger, for they shall be satisfied. And so make this reason: fast makes a man hungry: but the hungry are blessed. Therefore they that fast are more blessed. For full resolution of which argument, let S. Luke be conferred with S. Mattheu and S. Luke his meaning wil easily appear. For S. Mattheu his place is a perfit exposition of it, and y<sup>e</sup> which S. Luke toucheth briefly, S. Mattheu en- treateth more at large. The one saith: Blessed are they that hunger now. The other saith: Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied, And this blessing onely ap-

Luk. 6.



*A godly sermon of M. Benthams,*

pertayneth to the elect of God, not to  
euery Turke, or Iew, or wicked person  
when he is hungry. But do you think  
that the Apostles were either so igno-  
raunt, or so negligent, that neither in  
their acts nor in their Epistles they  
would make mention of it? if it had  
been so necessary to saluatiō, as many  
make it. The apostles, at what time  
certain fall brethren went from Iew-  
rie to Antioch, perswading y<sup>e</sup> Gentiles y<sup>e</sup>  
were conuerted to y<sup>e</sup> faith, to be circū-  
cised & liue after Moses law, assem-  
bled them selues together to consult  
what was best to be done in the mat-  
ter. In which consultation they de-  
creed to send Paule and Barnabas, with  
other of the brethren to Antioch with  
letters concerning their mind, which  
was not to burthen them with the  
AA. 15. impoꝛtable yoke of Moses law, but to  
wil them to abstain frō things offred  
vp to images, & bloud, & that that is  
strangled, and from fornication. Now  
if our fast from flesh had beene neces-  
sary for the Christians, it had beene  
an easie matter for the Apostles to  
haue

*vpon the Tentations of Christ.*

haue set it downe in their Epistles  
or letters, that as they shoulde at all  
times forbear the eating of those  
meates that were offered to Idols,  
from bloud.&c. So they should once in  
a yeare fast fourty dayes from fleshe  
together, as in time of *Lent*. But the  
Apostles neuer dreamed of any such  
superstition in fasting, much lesse en-  
tended to wryte of it. For they knew  
miracles were not to be followed. And  
although they prescribe fasting, yet  
no such fasting: but as from fleshe, so  
from all kinde of meates, as by their  
owne fast doth appeare. For *S. Paule*  
himself with many that were in ship  
with him, fasted not one day or two,  
but many, even fourteene without  
meat or drinke: and he wryteth of his  
fasting to the *Corinthians*, but of anie  
such fast as this is, he speaketh in no  
place. Wherefore it can not be appro-  
ued by the euangelists. For if we wil  
ground it vpon Christ his fast, then  
must oures necessarily agree with  
Christes in some point, which in no  
point agree any moze then an Egge  
and

AA.27.



*A godly sermon of M. Benthams,*  
and an *Differ*, neither in tyme, place,  
nor in any other circumstance. As by  
collation of the one with the other,  
will appeare manifestly. For *Chzist*  
was baptised the first of *Ianuarie*, and  
in the seuenth day (as some mē wryte)  
he was led of the holy Ghost into the  
desart, (or as the *Euangelist* sayth) by  
and by, or immediately after his baptism:  
and then he began his fast, which he  
continued for the space of forty dayes  
and forty nights, vnto the fiftenth or  
sixtenth day of *Februarie*. About what  
time for the most part our *Lent* begins  
neth, sometime before, and sometime  
after: As this yeare it beginneth iust  
about the time that *Chziste* his fast  
ended. *Chzist* fasted immediatly after  
his Baptisme, when hee was thirtie  
yeares old: we fast after our baptism  
indeed, but not before we be ten years  
old. *Chzist* fasted but once forty daies  
in thirtie three yeares: But we pre-  
sume to Fast forty dayes euerye  
yeare, taking more vpon vs in one  
yeare, then wee are scarce able to  
performe in all our lyfe. *Chziste*  
fasted



*Upon the Tentations of Christ.*

fasted forty dayes from all meates:  
and we abstain from no meats in the  
forty dayes, but onely from flesh, and  
think we followe Christ wel to. Christ  
in forty daies was not an hungred:  
And ere we haue fasted forty hours,  
our gorge gapeth for meate, and our  
bellies thinke our throates be cut. In  
what point then doth our fast agree  
w<sup>th</sup> Christ his fast: do you perceue any  
one thing agreeing: Yet this is mans  
presumption to take that most vpon  
him, that he is least able to do. What  
reasons are in scripture in the olde or  
new Testamentes, you may by these  
few perceiue. For I haue alleaged the  
most manifest places that make for  
the fast of forty dayes, as *Moses*, *E-*  
*lias*, and our Saviour Christ. Now  
therefore seeing it can not be ground-  
ed on scripture, I will come to the  
next part before proposed: and that is  
how it was vsed of the fathers in the  
Primitive Church, and how ours a-  
greeth with the same.

Concerning this part, to speake the  
truethe: the obseruation of Lent is  
no

*A godly sermon of M. Benthams,*

no new thing, not a yesterdaies bird.  
or inuented of late yeares: but it hath  
beene vlsed euen from the beginning  
of the Primatiue Church, not then  
commaunded vnder any paine to be  
observed of all men, but of mans vo-  
luntarie accord without precept. And  
yet they that first observed it, preten-  
ded not to follow Christ his fast, nei-  
ther was euerie mans deuotion a-  
like. For it was with them, as it is  
in euery congregation: some are more  
seruent in Prayer then other some,  
some are more ready to fast then o-  
ther, some more charitable towardes  
the poore, and more ready to releiue  
their brethren, then other. All which  
and such like exercises were not then,  
nor are not now to be enioyned vpon  
penalties, but are freely to bee left to  
mans conscience to do them as his a-  
bilitie will suffer him. For as a man  
is not commanded by God his worde  
to giue this day more then that: So  
he is not commanded to fast one day  
more then an other, but to doe both a  
like, as occasion shall serue, and hee  
shall

*Upon the Tentations of Christ.*

shall be able to perfourme them. And because some be poore, and haue more need to receiue then bestowe, more need to take almes then giue almes, & some be troubled with infirmities & diseases, & haue more need of meat to strengthē them, then of abstinence to humble them: therfore y<sup>e</sup> holy ghoſt in the scripture prouideth wel for them, and exhorteſt them to pray, not preſcribing them anie certaine ſpeciall time, but at all times, and in all places. Wherby we may gather, how al theſe are commaunded, or not commaunded but left to the conſcience of the doers. Thus at the beginning, ſome men better diſpoſed then others, to ſhew forth a good example of their religion and mortification, began to faſt fourtye dayes once in a yeare. Whoſe example moued many, that longed to haue the report of religious and godly men, on the ſame faſhion, though not with like deuotion, to faſt forty dayes alſo. For hipocrites can ſhew as faier a face ſometimes as the godly in deed, and to the woꝛlde they ſeeme

Hist. trip. lib.  
9 cap. 38.



*A godly sermon of M. Benthams,*

seeme more glorious oftentimes, that  
counterfait the woꝝkes of good men,  
then the saintes of God themselues.  
Well, at length the matter grewe to  
this issu, and the number of them that  
bled this Fast did so multiply, that al  
they which either were not able to do  
the like, or not so disposed, were ac-  
counted skant good Christians, be-  
cause they followed not the common  
example, and so to auoyd the flaunde-  
rous note of vndeuous persons, rather  
then of a ready & willing mind, gaue  
their priuy consentes to confirme this  
example. All men thus consenting,  
some for religion and Godlines sake,  
some of hypocrisie, some to auoid slan-  
der, ther lacked nothing but lawes to  
ratefie and establiſh this common con-  
sent. And those, the vndiscreet and vn-  
godly Bishops not long after consti-  
tuted, rather to get goods, then to pro-  
mote godlines, and set forth the glo-  
ry of God. For without regard or re-  
spect of persons, they clogged and fet-  
tered men with their leaden lawes,  
whose consciences they ought rather  
to

vpōn the Tentations of Christ.

to haue disburthened by Gods word,  
and to haue left it at liberty, as it was  
befoze. We reade in Eusebius that the Euseb. lib. 5.  
cap. 24.  
observation of Lent was left free for  
euery man to fast, or not to fast, and  
that it was not generally exercised of  
all men after one sort. For hee allea-  
geth Ireneus his wordes to confirme  
his minde. And the wordes be these.  
There is a disputation touching the man-  
ner or kinde of fasting. Some men suppose  
that the Fast of Lent should be observed  
but for one daie, other some two daies,  
Some more daies, and many fourtie daies  
accoumpting all the houres both of daie  
and night for a daie, which variety of the  
observation of Lent, had not it beginning  
now first in our time, but longe before vs,  
of them (I think) which did not simplie  
obserue at the beginning what was com-  
maunded them, but fell either by negli-  
gence or by foolish ignorance, into an o-  
ther custome. And notwithstanding all  
these, thought they vary among them-  
selves in the observation of Lent, yet they  
haue beene alwayes at quietnes, and now  
are at peace with vs, neither doth the di-  
uersity

A godly sermon of M. Benthams,  
uersitie of their fast breake the agree-  
ment of our fayth. Whereby you may  
vnderstande, that at the beginning  
there was no commandement giuen  
to bind men to forty dayes fast, seeing  
some fasted but one daye, some two  
dayes, some more, and some forty, and  
yet (saith he) they were all quiet and  
at peace, in this variety of fast. I fear  
me, if we should vary & differ so much  
in the obseruation of our Lent, (such  
an opinion of it is fixed in the heartes  
of the ignorant) it would breed such  
discention, that we should rather fall  
by the eares about it, then keep peace  
and charitie. But the vse was godly,  
where no man was compelled to ab-  
staine from fleshe, which loued not  
fishe. This testimony writeth Iren-  
us vnto Victorius the bishop of Rome.  
You may reade also in the tripartite  
hystory, that in the fasting dayes one  
man obserued one thing, another, an  
other thing. For the Romans fast three  
weekes before Easter, besides the sab-  
both day, and the Sonday. The Illy-  
rians, and all Grece, and Alexandria,  
fast



*Upon the Tentations of Christ.*

fast six weekes, which time they call Lent. Some beginne their fast seven weekes before Easter, and some fast but onely three weekes. Which bartetie declareth, that at the beginning men were not compelled, but left to their owne choice, either to fast or no. For untill *Gregorius* time, the people were not commanded this exercise of fasting, but were onely perswaded by the exhortations of the Bishops. And *Eusebius* affirmeth, that *Apollonius* an ecclesiasticall wyter, reproued *Montanus* an heretique amongst other things, for making lawes for fasting. And in the decrees the fourth distinction, we reade that *Telesphorus* a Bishop of Rome, made lawes concerning the Lent, and put a difference betweene the fast of the Clergie, and of the Laitie. For he commaunded that the Clergy should fast from *Quinquagesima* untill Easter, which is seven weekes, and that the Laitie shoulde fast but six weekes. Which thing to be so, *Ambrose* in his booke of sermons confirmeth, saying as it is in the

*Euseb. lib. 5.  
cap. 18.*

A godly sermon of M. Benthams,  
same distinction: *Quadragesima* hath  
fire weekes, to which *Telesphorus* the  
Bishoppe added the senenth; and all  
this time they call Lent. Thus by  
these writers you have hearde, how  
Lent was bled in the Primative  
Church. Now it followeth, that I de-  
clare, how it came vnto vs as it is,  
and how we agree with the first ble  
of it. *Before* *Gregorius Magnus* came to  
the *Popedome*, there were no strait  
lawes made to bind man to y<sup>e</sup> supersti-  
tious obseruation of Lent. But in his  
daies and since, the most part of grosse  
supersticio hath crept into the church;  
and he for his part, as he was very se-  
rious and diligent to inuent and set  
vp new ceremonies, so hee was verie  
busie also in making lawes for their  
continuance. Amongst which, hee  
made a law for the establishing of our  
fast of fouertie dayes. And because ma-  
nifest Scripture woulde not fit his  
mouth, nor serue his purpose directly,  
he went wickedly about to procure it  
by probabilite, allcadging this place  
of

*vpon the Tentations of Christ.*

of scripture, Thou shalt lay out the tith Deut. 14.  
of all maner of fruits, that come forth of  
thy field yeare by yeare. Out of which  
words, he hath violently wrested and  
wrong this inuention: That because  
fourty dayes be the tenth parte of a  
yeare, and we be commaunded to lay  
out the tithes or tenthes of our yeares  
ly frutes, therefore we ought dili-  
gently to fast them, and in no case,  
(except infirmities hinder vs) to  
breake them, but onely on sundayes.  
For saith he, from the first Sunday of  
Lent untill Easter, there be six weeks  
which containe fortie two dayes. Fro  
which if you take five sundayes then  
there are thirtie six daies remayning,  
which are the tenth part of thre hun-  
dred three score and five dayes, which  
make the whole yeare. Now because  
that thirtie six dayes doe not fully an-  
swere to Christ his fast, they deuised  
amongst them, to adde the foure daies  
going before, to make vp the iuste  
number of fourty. Wherein they put  
a monstrous greate mistery, and saye  
they fast fourty dayes for diuers cau-  
ses.



*A godly sermon of M. Benthams,*  
ses. One cause is, that they might re-  
pent and be soꝝ, soꝝ al that they haue  
transgressed in the foure Cuangelists,  
and in the tenne commaundements.  
Foꝝ tenne and foure multiplꝝed one  
with the other, maketh foꝝty. Which  
reasoꝝ, what foꝝce it hath to perswade  
men to bind them selues to fast fouꝝ-  
tie dayes. I trust you perceiue well  
inough, and I know the meanest and  
simplest of you is able to answer it,  
otherwise I would labour more in o-  
pening the subtletie of it. The second  
cause is, that they ought to confoꝝme  
them selues to their heade Chꝝiste,  
which fasted fouꝝty dayes. Unto this  
reason I haue answered sufficiently  
before, and I hope you are both satis-  
fied and confirmed therein. Foꝝ this  
number which they say, hath a miste-  
rie in it. They alleadge many places  
of scripture: as in Noah his time, all  
fleshe without the Arke was consu-  
med in fouꝝty dayes: and God fed the  
childeꝝ of Israell in the desert with  
Man, fouꝝty yeares: and was in his  
mothers wombe fouꝝty weekes: We  
pꝛea,

Gen. 7.  
Deut. 8.

*Vpon the Tentations of Christ.*

preached forty monethes: he lay in his graue forty houres, and such like. What hidden misteries these numbers carry in them, and how much and how aptly they make for this purpose, I leaue to your owne iudgements. The drift of this my talke is, to proue vnto you, that the fast of Lent is not, nor hath not beene so free since *Gregories* time, as it was before.

For hee made it so straightly obserued, that not onely fleshe, Egges, and such meates were forbidden, but also all maner of delicates, as may bee seene by many places of the decrees.

*Distin. 5. de con.*

Now that their fast might seeme like the fast that the *Primitive Church* obserued: for a while they ate nothing before night. But when such belly God *Papistes*, that coulde not fast as others had done before them, bare rule, they inuented a pretie policie if God would haue permitted it, and suffered them to haue brought it to passe: But because they coulde not do what they woulde, they did what they could: I meane when they could

*A godly sermon of M. Benthams,*

not remoue night, they altered the  
vnted time of Euening prayer, and  
sayde it before none, that then they  
might more lawfully cramme their  
paunches, and not prolong their fast  
vnto the Euening, as was accus-  
med: Or els without all doubt, the  
same fast should haue continued vnto  
our time. Such were their delusions  
to make men thinke and beleue that  
their fast was groundes vpon Gods  
worde in Scripture. And thus haue  
they beguiled the simple in weightier  
matters, and which touch more nec-  
lie the foundation of our faith. Now  
that you perceiue my meaning in  
these aforesayd cases: that is, that our  
fast of Lent is neither groundes on  
the olde nor new Testamentes, and  
that we differ from the Primitiue  
Church, making necessity of it, wher-  
as they made libertie: It shall not be  
needfull for me to trauaile any fur-  
ther in the matter. Yet because I  
haue sayde many thinges, which vt-  
terly denie our Lent fast to be groun-  
ded on God his worde, and all that  
haue



Haue heard me be not like affectioned,  
amongst whom perchaunce some will  
rather speake the worst, then the best  
of those thinges that they fancie not.  
I must needes speake something in  
mine owne defence, against euill and  
flaunderous reports, which els would  
be bruted of this my sermon. I mean  
not (beloued) to reuoke any thing hi-  
therto spoken. For all that I haue  
said is so true, that I durst be bould to  
publishe it, to the view of the world,  
and to maintaine it against all them  
that be aduersaries vnto it. If ye will  
not credit me in these thinges, reade  
the ancient and learned Doctor saint  
Augustine in his Epistles: Where he  
saith, The examples of saints (meaning  
Moses and Elias) are not of force to per-  
swade the fast of any one day, much lesse  
the fast of the Sabbath day. For of that  
dayes fast, he writeth purposely a-  
gainst one *Vrbicus*. And concerning  
the new Testament, he saith: I peru-  
sing or calling to mind, that which is in  
the writings of the Euangelistes, or A-  
postles, yea and in the whole instrument,

Epist. 86. ad  
Casul. con.  
vrb.

*A godly sermon of M. Benthams,*

which we call the new Testament, I see  
or perceiue that fast is commaunded: But  
vpon what dayes we ought to fast, and  
vpon what we ought not to fast, I finde it  
not decided, eyther by any commaunde-  
ment of the Lorde, or of the Apostles.  
This writeth the holy Doctor in that  
place. What shall we say then for the  
vse or continuance of it? Verily I  
wil say for my discharge, as the sayd  
Doctor sayth in the latter end of that  
Epistle, That if we wil neyther slander  
nor be slandered, let vs follow the cu-  
stome of the Church where we are, If it  
be not contrary to Gods worde, and  
yet the thing vsted be commendable.  
For although in his Epistle to Ianu-  
arij he saye, that Lent hath his au-  
thoritie of Moses, Elias, and Christ: Yet  
might he better haue answered by  
a rule that he giueth after in the same  
Epistle: That those thinges which are  
not agaynst our fayth, nor godly and good  
maners, and haue something to the exhor-  
tation of a godlyer lyfe: wheresoener we  
see them instituted, or know them to bee  
instituted, we should not only not improue,  
but

Epist. ad Iau-  
narij. l. 19.

Upon the Tentations of Christ,

but with prayse and imitation followe  
them, if the infirmitie of some doe not so  
hinder, that greater harme follow. In  
like maner say I, touching this fast  
of Lent, that because it being vsed  
as the Fathers haue vsed it, is not  
contrary to any Article of our faith,  
nor godly conuersation, notwithstanding  
it haue no expresse ground in  
scripture, may be well and commen-  
dable vsed, so long as the King and  
the Counsaile for the profite and com-  
moditie of this Realme, pretending  
no holinesse or religion in it, think it  
expedient. And in this respect, where  
you fast fourty dayes, for my part I  
would rather wishe you to fast fourty  
dayes more then one lesse, it beeing so  
necessary for our common wealth, as  
it is. And therefore haue I thus much  
spoken, to make it knowne vnto you,  
that it is not any commandement of  
God, but a politique and ciuill lawe  
made for the wealth of the Realme:  
and is with like reuerence and obe-  
dience to be obserued, as other lawes  
made for our maintenaunce and preser-  
uance



*A godly sermon of M. Bentbams,*  
seruation. Of which obedience to the  
King and his lawes, I would gladly  
intreat if time would suffer me. But  
because it passeth very fast away, I  
will returue to my text.

It followeth, That when Christ had  
fasted forty dayes and forty nights, he  
was afterward hungry. As it is an eu-  
ident token, that by his fast of fourtie  
dayes and forty nightes, and not to  
hunger, there is in him a power farre  
aboue the nature of man: So in that  
he hungred, it can not be denied but  
he was man. And this is a meet place  
to proue the humanitie of our Saui-  
our Christ, against all those heretikes  
that denied him to bee man. For in  
that he hungred afterward, he decla-  
red himselfe to be man.

Then came the tempter to him and sayd,  
if thou be the Sonne of God, make these  
Stones bread.

**T**HE subtle craft of the Deuill, is  
plainly described in this, that the  
Euangelist calleth him the tempter.  
For so long as fourtie dayes did con-  
tinue,

*Vpon the Tentations of Christ.*

finue, and Christe was not hungry,  
the Demill woulde not aduenture to  
tempt him: But when y<sup>e</sup> forty days  
were expired, and Christ wared hun-  
grie, he tooke the occasion and began  
to flatter. And wheras before he doub-  
ted to preuail, hearing God cal Christ  
his dearely beloued sonne: Yet now  
perceiuing Christ to be hungry, he be-  
gan to be somewhat more confident,  
and yet doubted too. For these two  
pointes seemed very absurd to him,  
that he shoulde both be the sonne of  
God, and be hungry. And therefore  
here he beginneth to be busie, and by  
reason of his hunger to tempt and se-  
duce him. Beginning with our saui-  
our, as he had don with *Eue*, when he Gen 3:  
perceined she was desirous of the ap-  
ple forbidden. For when he perceiued  
her appetite prouoked, he perswaded  
her to distrust and disobey Gods word  
which threatned they shoulde die the  
death, whensoever they eate of the apple  
forbidden. These subtle waies he vs-  
eth with all afflicted consciences and  
troubled mindes, when they once be-  
gin

*A godly sermon of M. Benthams,*

gin to faint or doubt of God his promises. In the desert when the children of Israel began to lack such sustenance, as they had in Egypt, hee moued them to grudge and murmur both against Moses and God. In time of dearth and famine, which is a scourge of God, hee endenoureth to make man thinke and beleewe that God hath forgotten him, or else that God doth not regard him: otherwise, he beareth them in hande, that God according to his promise would blesse all them which keepe his will and commandements, with corne, cattell, and all other things most plentifully: and not suffer them to lack in time of neede. And where he seeth the good afflicted with y<sup>e</sup> bad, he causeth them to grudge and murmur against God in such time of visitation. But if ye require examples of Sathans suggestions, you may easily remember, how of late days, in this realme he procured vs to murmur, grudge, & with open mouth to blaspheme God in the time of our scarcitie and pouerty,  
sent



*vpon the Tentations of Christ.*

sent amongst vs for the triall of our  
fayth, and perfection. And because we  
haue not such aboundance of victuals  
and other thinges wherewith this  
realme hath heretofore bene moſte  
plentifully blessed: the deuill moueth  
vs not to impute it vnto y<sup>e</sup> true cause,  
which is, our abhominable liuing:  
but vnto a false fained cause, which  
is, the extirpation of hypocrisie and  
superſtition, the rooting out of all I  
dolatry, I mean, to ſpeake plainlie,  
the ſuppreſſion and ouerthrow of ab  
beys, Monasteries, and all other falſe  
religious and rebellious houſes. For  
thus ſayth the vngodly: we had neuer  
good wo:ld, ſince the abbeyes, and ſuch  
other houſes were pulled down, with  
ſuche blaſphemous wo:des againſt  
God, as it grieues me to repeat. The  
deuill perceiuing vs moze bent to  
ſerue our bellie then God, and that  
we lacke part of thoſe thinges which  
wee inioyed abundantlie before, ſo  
tempts our greedy guttes, impatient  
of any lack, that he maketh vs to blaſ  
pheme God, and to ſlander his word.

He

*A godly sermon of M. Benthams*

Hee moueth vs not to consider how much better it is to serue the liuing Lorde in the desert with a little, then to be captiue vnder the proud hand of Pharaoh, and to continue in bondage and slavery by the fleshe pots of Egypt, But if we know how much libertie from sinne, is to bee preferred before the tyrannie of Pharaoh, or the deuill, we woulde not grudge, but be thankfull for our deliuerance. When Abbeis stood, & Monasteries, or houses of religion, or misrule rather, flourished, we were vnder Pharaoh, the prince of darkenesse, we were Captiues to the seruitude of sinne, and bondslaves to ignorance: with all the wealth that we had: and now beeing set free and at liberty from the same, shal we grudge at our God, because Satan tempteth vs: He taketh an occasion of vs, or els he would not be so busie. He tempted Eue, when he saw her delighted with the apple: And amongst vs hee seeth necessitie, and that we are not content with it, and therefore would haue vs murmur and grudge.

In

Ciril.lib. 9.  
cap. 16.  
in Ioh.

*Upon the Tentations of Christ.*

In like sort dealt he with Christ, ta-  
king occasion of his hunger, saying:  
If thou be the Sonne of God, &c. As  
though he would haue sayd to Christ:  
Perchance thou thinkest thy selfe to  
bee the Sonne of God, because that  
when thou wast Baptised of Iohn,  
thou heardest a voice saie: This is my  
dearely beloued sonne, in whom I am well  
pleased. Yet thou mayest be deceiued:  
For who can thinke or beleue that  
God will suffer his sonne so to be de-  
stitute of all comfort, to liue in the  
desart, to be in company with beasts,  
and to lacke mans helpe and succour  
in time of neede? Now thou art hun-  
gry, what wilt thou eat? Here is no  
bread: go to, if thou be Gods sonne as  
thou persuadest thy selfe, by the voice  
which thou heardest, linger no longer  
in hope, provide for thy selfe seeing  
God doth not. Here is nothing to eat,  
and thou art farr from the City: here  
be stones, change them into bread, it  
is an easie thing for thee to do, being  
Gods son. Thinkest thou God loneth  
thee, that letteth thee hunger so long?

Thou



*A godly sermon of M. Benthams*

“Thou mightest quickly perceiue, that  
“thou art deceiued being so sore hung-  
“rie: and yet God sends thee nothing  
“to satisfie thy desire. Thus the deuell  
laboured not so much to tempt Christ  
“by bidding him satisfie his hunger, as  
“to make him discredite Gods word  
“& that he was not Gods beloued, as  
“before he had hard. Likewise perswas-  
“ded he our forefather not to beleene  
“Gods word, which was a farre grea-  
“ter matter then the eating of the  
“forbidden fruite. Wee knoweth right  
“well, that the promises of God are set  
“foorth for the saluation of man, and  
“that our health dependeth onely ther-  
“upon. And therefore wee studie to  
“make vs let slip our hold, and the hope  
“that wee haue therein. Let vs then  
“watch and be diligent, least our sayth  
“grounded on the infallible trueth of  
“Gods worde, by his craft be weakned  
“and peruered. For if he preuaile so  
“much with vs, as to seduce vs from  
“the veritie of Gods holy worde, & to  
“yeeld our selues ouer as slaues to his  
“wicked temptations: Lord what shal  
become

*Upon the Temptations of Christ.*

become of vs: will not horrour be be-  
fore our eyes continually to trouble  
and terrifie vs: Shall we not liue in  
darknesse and in the shadow of death,  
and stand euen at the brim of the pit  
of desperation? O then (dearely belo-  
ued) what need had we to be circum-  
spect, and to take heed of sathans sug-  
gestions. For he goeth about continu-  
ally either by him selfe or his mini-  
sters, even like a roaring Lion, see-  
king whom he may deuour, whom re-  
sist in faith, as *S. Peter* biddeth you. *Pet. 5.*

For though he pretend neuer so faire  
a countenance, and seeme to giue you  
neuer so good counsel, though he coun-  
terfait the similitude of an Angell of  
light, yet he will be sathan and a lier  
still, and will seeke your confusion.

*Resist him therefore stedfast in faith.*

The wicked members of Sathan  
tempted our sauiour Christ, when he  
hanged on the crosse for mans redem-  
tion, and reuiled the mighty God  
with contumelious wordes: If he be  
the Sonne of God, let him come downe,  
and we will beleene him: And if God will  
haue him, let him saue him, with many

*A godly sermon of M. Benthams,*

like wordes of detestable wickednes,  
and horrible blasphemie. And thus he  
daylie tempteth the Godly, to bring  
them to infidelity. Against the which  
I beseech you marke Christ his an-  
swere, it will be much to our consola-  
tion and comfort. It is written: *Man*  
*liueth not by breade onely, but by euerie*  
*word that proceedeth out of the mouth of*  
*God.* Which testimonie or answer  
is taken out of the olde Testament,  
where Moses spake vnto Israel on  
this wise. *Thou shalt remember all the*  
*way, which the Lord thy God hath broghe*  
*thee, this forty yeares in the desert, that*  
*he might chasten thee and prooue thee, to*  
*know what was in thine heart, whether*  
*thou wouldest keepe his commandements*  
*or no.* Therefore bee humbled thee and  
made thee hungry, and fedde thee with  
Mann, which neither thou nor thy fathers  
knew of, to make thee know that man  
must not liue by breade onely, but by eue-  
ry word that proceedeth out of the mouth  
of the Lord must a man liue. The euan-  
gelist following the seuentie inter-  
preters addeeth, *euery worde* (which is  
not in the Ebrew text) to signifie the  
ver.

Deut. 8.



*Upon the Temptations of Christ.*

Virtue and power of God his worde,  
to be of as great efficacie and strength  
to nourish man, as other creatures  
appointed for the same. For as by his  
word all creatures and things were  
made and created: so, by and from the  
same worde haue all creatures their  
vertue and strength for mans food  
and nourishment. And therefore our  
saviour Christ bringeth scripture to  
confirm, that albeit customably and  
ordinarily man liueth by his meate  
and drinke; yet God both hath, and  
can shewe his power other waies.  
He fed the children of Israel in the de-  
sart, not with accustomed meates as  
at other times, but with a straunge  
maner of bread, and such as none of  
them knew. Seeing then, God so mar-  
uailously fedd his people in time past  
in the desert, and that not for fourtie  
dayes, but for fourtie yeares space,  
should he not be thought able to feede  
his dearely beloued sonne in the de-  
sart now also, vnlesse hee transub-  
stantiat stones into bread? If he be a-  
ble to feede man forty yeares with-  
out bread, is hee not able to feed his

*A godly sermon of M. Benthams,*

dearely beloued sonne fourty dayes  
without bread: Nay (dearly beloued)  
God is not bound to meanes, but  
sometimes he dealth with meanes,  
sometimes without, and sometimes  
against all meanes, and as it plea-  
seth the Lorde so come all thinges to  
passe. For the Lorde God is omni-  
potent. What needeth bread then, when  
God can send him heauenly food from  
aboue? *Man liueth not by breade onely,*  
*but by euery worde that proceedeth out of*  
*the mouth of the Lorde must man lyue.*  
Our sauour thus with scripture con-  
foundeth the temptation of the deuil,  
that thereby we may learne to do the  
same, without the consent either of  
custome or counsell. For this was the  
Deuill his intent, to make Chriſte  
thinke that because man lyueth com-  
monlie by bread and drinke, therefore  
Chriſt coulde not possibly liue any o-  
ther waies. But he was far deceiued:  
for Chriſte easely convinced him. I  
coulde wishe that all they, which ey-  
ther are tempted, or asked a question,  
woulde vse to answer by scripture  
yea, or no, and not be so much addic-  
ted

Upon the Temptations of Christ,

ted and sworne to customes and coun-  
rels. For they consider not what in-  
iurie they doe to the maiestie of God,  
that preferre mans doctrine before  
the holy scripture. Christ might haue  
answered otherwise if it had pleas-  
ed him, but he answered by scrip-  
ture, to teach vs to adhere and stick  
to scripture, as to a sure anker in all  
questions proposed. For hee might  
haue sayd, why temptest thou me: As  
though I coulde not lyue without  
breaðe. Can not I that giue life to o-  
thers, and am life it selfe, liue with-  
out breað, and prouide sufficiently for  
my selfe without thy counsell. Thou  
hast no charge ouer me, and therefore  
care not for me: for I can care for my  
selfe. Thus might our saulour haue  
cut him off, if hee had thought it con-  
uenient, and haue rebuked him shar-  
p-ly: but he replied with the scripture,  
and that with such gentlenesse, that  
the deuill was more ready and more  
bould to tempt him now, then before.  
For it followeth: and when he had  
said this, he said vnto him, If thou  
be the Sonne of God, cast thy selfe  
downe from hence. Then the Deuill toke him vp into the hea-  
u-ly



A godly sermon of M. Benthams,  
by Citie, and set him on a pinnacle of the  
Temple. &c.

**T**HE deuill perceiuing that his  
former temptation preuailed not,  
inuenteth an other. For when hee  
coule not bring Christ to infidelitie  
before, now he teyeth him with vaine  
glory. It is wonderfull to see the subt  
ties and hyfts that sathan vseth, and  
yet neuer any without some probabi  
lie. For it may seeme that he grounds  
his deuises vpon the practises of such  
men, as thinking they bee in Gods  
fauour, to winne praise and commen  
dation, dare run headlong into daun  
gers on their owne accord without a  
ny necessity at all. This considerati  
on he may seeme to haue had, when  
he take h and setteth our Saviour on  
the pinnacle of the temple at Ierusa  
lem, reasoning with him selfe (as it  
were) on this maner: For as much as  
my first purpose is frustrate, I wil at  
tempt the matter an other way. I wil  
try whether vaine glory will allure  
him to shew some miracle at Ierusa  
lem, where the multitude that looke &  
behold him, may magnifie and speake  
glo,

gloriously of him. There is no man in this desert to looke vpon him, but at Ierusalem there is greate ptease of people, and therefore I will lead him thither, and set him on y<sup>e</sup> pinnacle, and will him, if he be desirous of fame or glory, to throw him selfe downe headlong in the sight of all the people, that he may be had in reputation amongst them, and perchaunce be made their king & cheife gouernour. But to bring this policie to some effect, he repeateth the same words that he had vsed before: *If thou be the sonne of God, &c.* Seeing thou stickest so much to the words that thou heardest at thy baptism, and that thou trustest so surely in Gods prouidence, that thou wilt not seeke for thy selfe in extreame poverty and hunger, caring for nothing to refrethe thy feeble body withall: it were good for thee, if thou wouldest be accounted as thou takest vpon thee to be, to shew some straunge feat to the people, to settle and perswade them in the truth of the matter. And therefore if thou wouldest follow mine aduise, I woulde giue thee counsell to goe to

*A godly sermon of M. Benthams,*

“ Ierusalem, that famous and populous  
“ City, where to confirme vnto all the  
“ people which shall behold thee with a  
“ miracle, that thou art Gods son, the  
“ sauiour of the world, the Messias that  
“ they haue long looked for, thou shalt  
“ cast down thy selfe headlong from the  
“ pinnacle where I will set thee. Thou  
“ needest not to doubt or feare any dan-  
“ ger, the peril is foreseene, and a reme-  
“ dy prepared. For God, whose sonne  
“ thou thinkst thou art, hath giuen his  
“ Angels charge ouer thee, They shall  
“ take thee in their hands, least at any time  
“ thou shouldst dash thy foote against a  
“ stone. Is not this a godly pretended  
“ counsell, to set a man in the mast of  
“ baingloze with such coloured words?  
“ What a strong perswasion was this?  
“ Tell me beloued, what Orator or  
“ counsaillor of them all, can handle his  
“ matter more cunningly? Surely it is  
“ so baited with sweete and enticing  
“ wordes, that it is impossible for any,  
“ but the sonne and saints of God, and  
“ such as God miraculously deliuereth,  
“ to auoid him, and escape his tempta-  
“ tion. For infinite no doubt is the nu-  
ber



ber of them, that both in time past,  
and at this present, Sathan hath en-  
chaunted and enflamed with vaine  
glory: and I beseeche God there bee  
none amongst vs. Amen. Here you  
may note with me the deuill his ex-  
pertnes in scripture, who disdaining  
to take so sudden a repulse at Christs  
hand, alleageth one place of scripture  
for an other. The place that he citeth  
is in Dauids psalmes, where the **120.** Psal. 91.  
phet setting forth the happy state and  
felicitie of them, that are vnder Gods  
protection and prouidence, among o-  
ther comfortable verses, hath these  
two, which sathan in this place infer-  
reth against Christe, saying as it is  
written: *He shal giue his angels charge  
ouer thee for to keepe thee in all thy ways  
They shal beare thee in their hands, that  
thou dash not thy foote against a stone.*  
Which words declare, in what assu-  
rance they liue that put their whole  
trust in Gods defence, and what sa-  
ferly care the lord hath ouer his ser-  
uants that comiteth them, as kings  
and great men do their heirs to faith-  
full hourses, vnto the protection of  
his

*A godly sermon of M Bentham,*

his angels, that they fall not into danger. But the deuill both depraueth & abuseth the true sense & meaning of this place. For one part he omitteth which is in the Prophet, and all the rest he applieth to false promises, and wicked persuasions. For notwithstanding the faithfull and elect of God be kept of angels in all their waies, yet are they not beside or against their waies. The waies of man you know are common and ordinary: and therefore it were a madd point for a man, because aungels are his ouerscers, to take vpon him to swim ouer the sea, when he may sail ouer by ship, or for Christ to haue cast him selfe headlong from the pinnacle, whē he might come downe by some other ordinary way. For this had bin to tempt God his father, & to suspect him as it were, that he would not be as good as his word. Take heed therefore how ye trust Satan whosoever ye are, yea though he bring scripture with him. For though he apply the scripture neuer so truely (which he seldom doth) yet al tendeth to your vtter destruction. Hence learn  
like

Upon the Temptations of Christ.

likewise, to put your whole affiaunce  
in the providence of God, and yet al-  
wayes use the ordinary meanes that  
he hath appointed you. For otherwise  
you shew your selues not so much to  
trust in him, as to tempt him, as the  
deuill did our saviour. To reason here  
how the deuill tempted Christe, whether  
bodily or by imagination; as some  
haue don, because it is a questiō more  
curious then fruitful, I thinke it bet-  
ter to passe it ouer, then to search it  
out. Let vs for our parts learn hereby  
that the deuill is busie in tempting all  
them that be placed in authority. For  
like as that citie or castel that is set &  
builded on the top of an hill, is most o-  
pen and obied to all stormie tempests  
and blasts of weather: so they that be  
aduanced and set (as it were) on the  
pinacle or top of office, honor, or digni-  
tie, are most egged on by the deuill to  
cast down them selues thorow ambi-  
tion, vaine glory, couetousnes, & such  
like offences. All of vs trauaile with  
too much love of our selues, and that the  
deuill spies well inough, or els hee  
would not be so nere our elboves at  
all



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all times as he is. But we minister  
him matter to worke on still, which  
untill we cease to doe, he will neuer  
leau off his temptations. For Gods  
sake therefore remember your selues  
betime, and reforme these things pre-  
sently, that God may haue his glory,  
Gods ministers ioye, and the deuill  
shame by your good conuersatiō. Now  
let vs heare what aunswere Christe  
made to this scripture alleaged of the  
deuill.

Againe it is written: Thou shalt not  
tempt the Lord thy God.

**B**ECAUSE the deuill alleaged scripture  
our sauour replieth with scripture  
again: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord  
thy God. As though he should say: thou  
perswadest me to cast my selfe downe  
backward; and to haue no care what  
I do, Because God appointed his angels  
to keepe me. I beleue certainly that  
the angels will beare me in their handes,  
that I hurt not my foot against a stone. I  
know that God hath deputed them to  
keepe mee, yet will I not followe thy  
wicked counsell, for I haue thy mea-  
ning at my fingers ends. Thou wilt

Upon the Tentations of Christ.

Wilt thou haue me to tempt God my father ,,  
as thou madest the fathers in the de- ,,  
sert, with miracles not necessary. But ,,  
I know their rewarde, and how they ,,  
sped, I wil take heed by their harmes. ,,  
I am a man, and I wil follow mans ,,  
waies, and not cast my selfe headlong ,,  
into daunger where I need not. Here ,,  
is a way to come vp, I will come ,,  
down the same way. What need I to ,,  
tempt my God, or try whether his an- ,,  
gels will preserue me, hauing y same ,,  
way to descend, that I ascended: I am ,,  
forbidden to do it, and euery man els, ,,  
and therfore I will not. For it is wryt- ,,  
ten: Thou shalt not tempt the Lorde thy ,,  
God. These wordes of our saviour are  
written in y fift booke of Moses. where, Deut. 6.  
after that Moses had giue out the ten  
commandements to the people, as it  
is in the chapter next before, and had  
exhorted them to feare the true God of  
Israel, by renewing his promises made  
to Abraham, Isaac, & Iacob, their fore-  
fathers, he forbiddeth them idolatrie,  
and giueth them this charge with all:  
Ye shal not tempt the Lorde your God, as  
yae did tempt hym in the place of tempta-  
tion.

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tion. Which was, when they came fro  
the desert of sin, and by the Lords ap-  
pointment camped at Rephidim: wher  
finding no water to drinke, they be-  
gan to chide with Moses, and asked  
him: *Why hast thou brought vs out of  
Egypt, to kill vs, our children, and our cat-  
tell with thirst, And they tempted the*  
“ Lord saying, *Is the lord among vs, or not*  
“ *As if they had said: thou hast brought*  
“ *vs into this desert, where nothing can*  
“ *be found for vs to drinke. We are ve-*  
“ *ry thirsty, and more like to pine away*  
“ *for lack of water, then to live, unlesse*  
“ *we depart, and yet thou makest vs as*  
“ *hyde here still. Couldst not thou haue*  
“ *suffered vs to tarry in Egypt, where*  
“ *we had plenty both of meat & drinke:*  
“ *but thou must leade vs hither, where*  
“ *we want both? We can not thinke, &*  
“ *God is among vs. For if hee were,*  
“ *would he suffer vs, (being his owne*  
“ *people) to be thus afflicted for lacke of*  
“ *drinke? Thus did they repine & grudge*  
against Moses: and therefore he called  
the place *Massa* or *Meriba*, the place  
of temptation or strife. And to this  
point the deuill bringeth man in his



*Vpon the Tentations of Christ.*

aduersitie and affliction to think that  
God is displeased & angry with him,  
and that the promises of God apper-  
tain not vnto him: by that meanes to  
make him dispaire of him selfe, and  
his own temptations may take place.  
As though God coulde not be among  
them, whom he afflicteth, nor fauour  
them, whom he visiteth. S. Paule vsing  
the wordes of Salomon, biddeth the  
Hebrewes be of an other minde: De-  
spise not the chastening of the Lorde,  
neither faint when thou art rebuked of  
him: For whom the lord loueth, he chast-  
neth: and he scourgeth euery son that hee  
receiueth. As God then might be and  
was among them, though he punished  
the Israelites with lacke of drinke, so  
that it was vnnecessary to try it by a  
ny miracle: so it was vnnecessfull for  
Christ to proue him selfe the sonne of  
God, or to try whether angels would  
preserue him, to cast him selfe downe  
headlong from the pinacle. For that  
had been a flat temptation. So y<sup>e</sup> you  
see how aptly Christe alleadged this  
place. *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy  
God.* Out of which wordes what lessons  
may

Prou. 3.

Heb. 12.

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may profitably be gathered. Though  
I haue partly shewed you before : yet  
marke againe I beseech you, for a good  
thing can not be tolde too often. We  
learn how dangerous a thing it is to  
tempt, & to try God, and to trust to ex-  
traordinary helpes, when ordinary  
means are appointed for vs. This is a  
grievous temptation, and yet vled too  
commonly of very many in this our  
realme of *England*. For there be some  
idle belly God persons, that because  
Christ biddeth vs not to be careful for  
our liuing, but to looke on the byrds of  
the ayre, that liue and labor not, take  
occasion to loyter at our dozes, and vt-  
terly neglect all honest labour, where-  
by they might liue like other men.  
But experience proueth, and we see  
it with our eyes, that such persons for  
the most part fall to robbing & stealing,  
and so being vnworthy to liue y<sup>e</sup> will  
not labour for a due rewarde of their  
life misled, are hanged to death. And  
there be some, that because the letter  
killeth, & knowledge maketh proud,  
neglect ordinary study : And because  
Christ when hee sendeth his disciples  
to

Upon the Temptations of Christ.

to preach, promisseth to giue them in the  
same houre what they shoulde speake,  
thinke it not needfull to study the scrip-  
tures. If we shoulde looke that the holie  
Ghost should onely giue vs knowledge  
by a miracle of inspiratton, and cōtemn  
the usual meanes, wherby all men com-  
monly attaine to knowledge, both in  
Gods worde, and in all other sciences,  
were not this to tempt God as the deuill  
tempted Christ? In vaine then were the  
tonges, books, interpreters, readers, and  
all the instrumentes that God hath ap-  
pointed. For albeit the spirit of God o-  
peneth euery mans heart before hee can  
vnderstand, yet he giueth knowledge to-  
gether with his meanes: As the Eunuch  
of Ethiopia, who vnderstanding not A&B.  
what he read, before God bled the minis-  
tery of Philip to instrct him, doth  
most plainly declare. And S. Augustine  
in his fourth booke *de doctrina christiana* Aug. de doct  
saith: That if this reason were good, a man Chri. cap. 16  
shoulde not pray at al, because God knoweth  
what we haue need of before we pray, Nei- Math. 6.  
ther should the husband man till or sow his  
ground, because neither he that planteth nor 1. Cor. 3.  
he that watereth is any thing, but God that  
giueth

If



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ginneth the increase. But thus you may see how ready the wicked and ungodly alwaies are to tempt God, as sathan did Christ. Againe, in that Christ answered the deuill his allegation of scripture by the scripture, we may learne to interpret one place of scripture by another, when they seeme to repugne. But surely if the deuill had beene so saucy with Christ, as many are in our daies, which will admit no sense, but such as please them: he might haue replied against Christ, and sayd: It is no temptation of God, to cast thy selfe downe: for God hath charged his angels to keep thee in all thy wayes. So that whether thou goe downe, or cast thy selfe downe, thou shalt be safe. Thus might the deuill haue reasoned, following the literal sense of the wordes. But he was a more gentle disputer, and not so impudent in sticking to the letter, as the Papistes of our daies are. He knew by Christs answer that he had mistaken it, & therefore ceased to contend any longer about that text, but tryed him an other way, as ensueth.

*The Devil tooke him vp againe vnto an exceeding*

*Vpon the Temptations of Christ.*

ceeding high mountayne, and shewed him  
all the kingdomes of the worlde, and the  
glory of them. &c.

**T**his is the third temptation after  
this Euangelist, but after Luk: it is Luk. 4.  
the second. Wherby you may see they la-  
boured not so much of the order and ma-  
ner, as of the matter it selfe. They both  
agree of three temptations, though they  
vary in the order of them. But the deuill  
desirous to bring his purpose about, I  
know not thorow what hopehausing the  
foile before, is not ashamed to assay the  
matter againe: And therefore he vseth a  
more easie way. He willed not Christ  
here to deny God directly, nor to worke  
any miracle, but he went about to make  
him in loue with y<sup>e</sup> world, with welth &  
riches, wherby many men many times  
decline from God vniawares. Neither  
doth the deuill trifle in the matter, but  
he offereth euen the largest and the wel-  
thiest kingdomes of the world, and to en-  
flame him, as he thought the more, hee  
sheweth them, and al the glory of the in  
a vision. Marke the subtletie of the tem-  
pter. He biddeth not Christ fall down and  
worship him on y<sup>e</sup> plaine ground in the  
desart,

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desart, but he taketh him vp into an exceeding high mountaine, and sheweth him all the coastes and kingdomes of the world, in the brauest and gloziest maner that he  
“ coulde, saying: Is not this a pleasant  
“ kingdome? Is not this a welthy realme  
“ Is not this a glorious empire? Whow  
“ happy & fortunate are those rulers, y are  
“ in so high estate? What a delicious lyfe  
“ might he lead y were Lord ouer two or  
“ thzee of the? Might not y man triumph?  
“ Al these kingdoms which thou seest are  
“ in my hand to dispose & bestow where &  
“ how I list. This I giue to this mā, and  
“ that to an other: but if thou wilt do as I  
“ would haue thee, & be ruled by me, I wil  
“ set thee aboue them all. For it is meet y  
“ the son of God should haue larger & grea  
“ ter kingdomes, then any worldly pnce  
“ And therefore I am contented to giue  
“ thee, not onely al these kingdoms which  
“ thou seest, but also the power and glory  
“ of them. Thou shalt not buy them: thou  
“ shalt pay neither gold nor siluer for the:  
“ I wil aske but reason of thee, y thou sal  
“ down before me, in token of obedience &  
“ homage and worship me. I require but  
little: yet do this, & I will performe my  
pze. mīse.



Vpon the Tentations of Christ.

promise. The world would think this a maruailous temptation: here are as sweet words as can be. For who is more bound to his lord, then he that payeth no rents for his lands? Our landlords wil not let out their groundes so good cheape. But these words as y<sup>e</sup> tempter bleseth the, are most false and full of blasphemous Idolatry. For though the deuill, the ruler of darknes, be called the prince of y<sup>e</sup> world, yet he is not so called, as though he had kingdomes or empires at commandment, (for the land is the lords, & in his hands are the ends of the world) but the deuill is called the prince of the world, because he ruleth & beareth the chiefe stroke ouer the children of vnbeleife, which sometimes in scripture are called the world. So that he lyed falsly, in saying all the kingdomes of y<sup>e</sup> worlde were his, and it was a blasphemous presumptiō against God, to motiō Christ Iesus to fall down & worship him. Who as he hath bene a blasphemer of God & his works frō the beginning: so he continueth in these our daies, perswading the worlde no lesse to fall downe & worship him now, then he did heretofore. For I know not how but

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sure it is so, & my conscience will not suffer me to conceale it, Sathan hath taken many of our ministers, and carried them vp to an exceeding high mountain, and shewed them al the spiritual lininges  
“ almost in y<sup>e</sup> world, Bishoppicks, Dean-  
“ ries, Debends, Personages, and vicar-  
“ ages, and hath told them: this is a wel-  
“ thy Bishoppick, this is a rich Deanrie,  
“ this is a fat benefice, they are all in my gift, I am y<sup>e</sup> patron of them: fall downe therfore before me & worship me, and if one wil not content you, I wil giue you pluralites. Let neman think these things to be forged or sucked out of mine owne fingers. For writers make mention, y<sup>e</sup> the deuil in deed gaue the Bishoppick of Rome once, & since y<sup>e</sup> time it was neuer good. And is he not so able now, thinke you, to giue a p<sup>er</sup>re benefice, as he was then to giue the fattest bishoppick in the world: Let no man be offended with me for speaking y<sup>e</sup>, which al y<sup>e</sup> world by experience saith to be true. For where these ministers should be preachers, they are long tied: and that cometh not without great temptatiō. For thus he reasoneth  
“ with the: speak no moze of iustification:  
meddle

*Upon the Tentations of Christ.*

meddle no more with controuersies: rub  
no mā on the soze: let euery man liue as  
he list without reprehensib or admonition  
& you shal lack no liuing. Do you thinke  
that sathan hath not thus swozne many  
to silence? I haue hard of diuers y at the  
beginning haue beene very godly preas-  
chers: but after they haue bin once chow-  
ked vp with many livinges, they haue  
had such a bone in their throates, as the  
Deuil wold haue it, y they would seldem  
open their mouth to speake any more. I  
besech God giue vs grace to withstande  
auoid this his flattrring and sweet tēpta-  
tion. Once not long since I spake aganst  
such in a place where I was. & after my  
sermō was ended, it was tolde me, that  
some called me a yong mā, & said it was  
but a pang of heate, & that I gaped for a  
liuing: which obtained I woulde be as  
quiet as other men. I am a yong man  
still, & I am not sorry for it, but I thank  
my God for it, who I trust will, at his  
pleasure, turn both my youth & mine old  
age to his glory. For S. Paul hath taught  
me not to contemne youth. But where  
they sayd it was but a pang, y was not  
true: for I was as circumspect in it as I



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could, & I haue now the same mind and iudgement & I had then, though a little more confirmed by the scriptures & ancient doctors: and to say I gaped for a living, it is vntrue. For I might haue had since y<sup>e</sup> time a rich and worshipfull living, if I would haue taken it: but if to take a benefice should make me tongue tied, I had rather haue none whilst I liued. Yet what I should do I cannot tell, I will not presume too much of mine own strength, seeing more godly & better learned men seduced by the flattery of y<sup>e</sup> Devil and the world. But as I am now minded, I had rather go on begging from doore to doore, and liue in extrem povertie then without diligent preaching to my flock liue neuer so magnificently. I enuy no mans lining though it were three times so much, but y<sup>e</sup> men take vpon the more then eyther they are able or willing to discharge, it is great sinne, and seemes to proceed from sathan his temptation. For vndoubtedly men take not so many benefices now, because they ca<sup>n</sup> not mean to discharge them: but because one will not suffice to main<sup>t</sup>ain them lordly and wealthily, nor to get goods together for many

Upon the Tentations of Christ.

many yeares: The gospel of long time  
thorow the tyrannie of the Romish A-  
schivist, by whom pluralities first came,  
hath been made a cloak for concoulines.  
But I pray God pull off the cloake, that  
every man may appeare in his plaine  
coat. Of these wicked Mammonites, S.  
Ambrose in his booke de dignitate sacer-  
dotali saith: I brough many be hath gotten  
honour nor dae vnto him, and hath lost God  
in his inward man: flesh hath taken the dig-  
nity, and the soule hath lost her beauty. The  
flesh being maid, is become mistres ouer the  
soule, and the soule which was mistres is  
made seruant to the flesh. Flesh hath rule o-  
uer the people, and the soule serueth the De-  
uill: to his flesh he hath gotten a benefice,  
and losse to his soule. What a wretched  
such a one to win all the worlde, and to  
endamage his owne soule: I appeale to  
your consciences, to which I speake ra-  
ther then to your eares: Do you thinke  
Englad is not combed with many such  
as S. Ambrose speaketh off? Let no man  
take my wordes so generally as though  
I secluded none frō this company. For  
I meane onely these concetous dumbe  
dogs, or shadowes of ministers: not the  
true

Amb. de dig.  
sacer. cap. 5.

Deu. 2. 10

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true ministers them selues, or the good  
pastors of their flock. Of whom because  
the number is small, and the harvest ve-  
ry great, let vs desire the lord daily more  
and more to encrease it, that his people  
be not starued for lack of food, but streng-  
thened in the faith to the glory of his  
name. Thus haue we hearde the third  
temptation of Satan, against Christ.

Then saide Iesus vnto him, Auoyd Iacobine:  
For it is written, Thou shalt worship the  
lord thy God, & him only shalt thou serue.

**B**Efore, when the deuil went about to  
make Christ discredite God in his  
promises, Christ answered him mildly:  
but now when the deuil wil prefer him-  
selfe before God, our sauiour rebuketh  
him sharply, and commandeth him to a-  
uoid: but with authority of scripture, as  
he did before. To teach vs, that scripture  
should be our shield, our defence and co-  
fort in al temptation. This scripture is  
take out of the fift booke of Moses called  
Deuteronomie, where Moses speaketh to the  
Israelites, with like words to the same ef-  
fect: Thou shalt feare the lord thy God, and  
serue him. By this place our sauiour con-  
uinceth the deuil, & biddeth him auoide.

And

gibson  
17. 953. 102. 1

Deu. 6. & 10



upon the Temptations of Christ.

And here, if I had lesure, I might speak  
of the difference, which the Schole men  
make betwene *latría*, which is the true  
and liuely worship of God, and *idolátrie*,  
which is honest obedience due to man,  
not forbidden by this scripture. Onely it  
forbiddeth, to give y<sup>e</sup> inward worship of  
the mind, y<sup>e</sup> appertaineth only to the al-  
mighty God, vnto any creature besides.  
So y<sup>e</sup> these words of God alleged by our  
sauiour, import thus much, that because  
God had don such maruailous works, &  
wonderous miracles for the deliuerance  
of his people out of Egypt, to y<sup>e</sup> astonish-  
ment not only of y<sup>e</sup> Egyptians, but of al y<sup>e</sup>  
world, no strength no power being able  
to stand o<sup>r</sup> preuaile against his might:  
therefore they ought to feare the lord, and  
serue him. As though he should say: see-  
ing I haue shewed such power vnto Pha-  
raoh & his host in working wonders for  
thy sake, O Israel, & haue deliuered thee  
so mercifully from all thy miseries, me  
thinks I may by right claim thy seruice  
y<sup>e</sup> shalt feare me as a lord of magnificent  
strength & power, as an omnipotent God, y<sup>e</sup>  
made all things, y<sup>e</sup> shalt serue & worship  
me, as a merciful, long suffering God:  
thou

*A godly sermon of M. Benthams.*

Thou shalt praise me, invoke me, depend on me, as thy helper, thy gouernor thy protector: & that only, thou shalt seek for health, helpe, aid, succour & all of me and besides me, of none. If God then be the maker of all things, the giuer of all things, the Lorde of all things, & made heauē, earth, & sea & al that is therein, if he be giuer of life, liberty, health, welth and whatsoever, and haue al things vnder his hand: did not & deuil lie falsly, in saying al the kingdoms of & world were his, and at his dispositiō: did not & deuil work high treason against Gods maie. ty, by tempting the Lorde of life to fall down before him and worship him, & so to haue committed beastly and blasphemous Idolatry: What auant Satan, saith our sauiour, thy words preuail not, and thy temptations can take no place: for it is writte, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God, but him onely shalt thou serue.

Wherby briefly you may vnderstande, what the true worship of God is, & how much against Gods glory is & worshiping of saints: wherof, if I had not been tedious to you already, I woulde haue spoken more at large. But I wil hasten

*Upon the Temptations of Christ.*

towards an end.

*Then the deuil left him.*

**H**ere *S.* James his saying is proued true: resist the deuil & he wil flee from you. *Iam. 4.* By which example we may learne, y<sup>e</sup> though the godly be continually tempted and assaulted, yet if they stande constantly, and shrink not, they may be sure of the victorie. For, God is faithful, which wil not suffer them to be tempted aboue their strength as *S. Paul* saith, & is able (as *S. Peter* writeth) to deliuer the Godly from temptation. *1. Cor. 10.* *2. Pet. 2.* *Ioh.* was tempted, but he ouercame: the Apostles were sundry & many waies tempted, but they triumphed alwayes. The patriarchs & Prophets haue bene many times tempted, but they neuer fainted. And here you see our sauiour was tempted, but he ouerthrew y<sup>e</sup> deuill and vtterly confounded him, euen with a word of his mouth. This hath our sauiour bene content to do for vs, submitting himselfe to Satans temptation, to declare vnto vs, y<sup>e</sup> whilste we be in this life we are in danger of temptation also but yet if we abide it stedfastly without starting, we shal be sure to win the victorie, as he hath done before vs. Let no man



*A godly sermon of M. B. n. h. a. m. s.,*

man therfore either think it strange or  
be dismayed if he be tempted. For can y  
members speed better then the head? Do  
need the members feare their trial, whe  
the head hath subdued the tempter? If  
the head had fayled, there had been some  
cause why the members might feare:  
But since it is otherwise, who is so faint  
hearted that can doubt of the victory?  
Wherefore (dearely beloved) since it is  
so, that Sathans temptations can not  
touche vs, if we persist in the faith, nor  
preuail against vs, if like true seruants  
and followers of our Lorde and sauiour  
Jesus Christ, we resist him by the scrip-  
tures: Let vs exercise our selues in the  
word of the Lord day and night, and let  
vs not yeeld either at the first, second, or  
third bzunt, but let vs tarry the Lordes  
leasure, and in the ende we may be cer-  
tain euen to weary the deuil, and make  
him faine to forsake vs.

*And behold, the Aungels came and mini-  
stred vnto him.*

**A**fter these forty dayes and forty  
nights were expired, and sathan had  
left him, our sauiour began to hunger:  
and God sent his aungels to minister  
such

**Vpon the Temptations of Christ.**

Such thinges as hee lacked, vnto him.  
This is a m table patterne of constan-  
cie and patience: He grudged at no-  
thing, hee mistrusted not Gods provid-  
dence, but tooke all patiently that God  
sent: And therefore God sent his angels  
to comfort and relieue him. And thus  
may the Childzen of God perswade  
themselves, that God will provide for  
them in all their extremities, if they  
put their trust in him. He fedde the ho-  
ly Prophet Elias by rauens, and also by  
an angell. He fedde Daniel in the Lions  
denne. God neuer forgetteth nor forsak-  
eth them that trust faithfully in him.

2. King. 17.  
& 19.

For as Dauid saith: I haue beene young,  
and now am olde: yet did I neuer see a iust  
man forsaken, nor his seed seeking his breed.  
But alas, our faith is so weake, and  
our charitie so colde, our patience so  
small, and our surdy stomaches so big,  
that we will rather tempt our God,  
spoil our neighbours, murmur & fight  
against God, if he once for our trial sa-  
me to lay his heuy hande on vs, th-  
to waite on his leasure, or to l-  
upon  
him, for his fauor. But I beseech the O-  
merciful father, so to strengthe vs against  
our

Psal. 37.

*A godly sermon of M. Benthams*

our enemy, that we may have a valiant  
conquest over the devill, and all his so-  
cietie, and that we may have the mini-  
stery of the Angelical company, as here  
had our Saviour and redeemer Iesus  
Christe : to whome with the father and  
the holy ghost be all honour and glo-  
ry for ever and ever.

**Amen.**





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